



SOUTHMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, USA



1124 Montgomery Highway, Vestavia, AL 35216



A WORD FROM TOM...

I am excited to begin this new journey with you. In speaking with many of you, I feel like this excitement is shared. Please know from the very beginning that we are thankful for your prayers, your kind words, and your generosity as the Bryson Family makes its way to Southminster. I have been reflecting on the excitement that surrounds new beginnings in recent weeks.

There is an excitement in something new. Maybe this excitement springs from the thrill of going to new places, seeing new sights, or experiencing a world bigger than it was yesterday. "Something new" is a mystery and exhilarating. It is a time that new possibilities are available to us and might lead us beyond our expectations. There is an excitement that comes with something new.

However, if we are honest, there is a hesitancy and anxiety in something new as well. New is probably different. It might not be what we expect. Newness could bring a challenge. We are not prepared to meet a challenge that might leave us worse than we are at present. There is a hesitancy and anxiety that comes with something new.

My mind goes to the newness of the Easter proclamation. Easter brings both realities of "Newness." There is joy and celebration that God's love and power did defeat death through Christ's resurrection. The God who creates us, loves us, and nurtures us now redeems and restores us to something completely new. Easter brings a reality that causes us to see the world differently, understand creation more completely, and love one another more absolutely.

Easter also brings forward many anxieties. There are questions that come with this new creation that the church has wrestled with for centuries. How does it work? Can we trust God over our doubt and fears? How can God love me? Will I really be saved? We are asked to trust God and not our own works or knowledge or endeavors. Easter brings anxiety because we are completely reliant upon God.

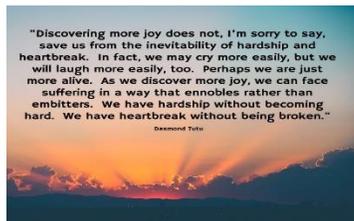
Easter asks us to trust God, even when it is not easy, even in the midst of change, even in our doubt or unbelief or struggle. Easter is the newness of God that already surrounds us, goes before us, and the creative love that bursts into our lives.

Our new journey is to trust God with our joys and anxieties. I am looking forward to the many blessings and discoveries of God's grace along this road.

Easter blessings.

Tom

JOY & SORROW



My dear friends,

By now I am hopeful you have received word via e-mail or regular mail of a new call in ministry for me. In fact, it may be that the letter I wrote describing that call to First Presbyterian of Garner, appeared in the mail the same day as this newsletter.

As I continue to ponder the joy of this new call, combined with the sorrow that naturally accompanies saying "goodbye," I have been mindful of these words written by Archbishop Desmond Tutu:

*"Discovering more joy does not save us from the inevitability of hardship and heartbreak. In fact, we may cry more easily, but we will laugh more easily too. Perhaps we are just more alive. Yet as we discover more joy, we can face suffering in a way that ennobles rather than embitters. We have hardship without becoming hard. We have heartbreaks without being broken."*¹

These words are a salve to me. For, friends, I have cried both tears of joy and sorrow, and I have laughed deeply and heartily these past few weeks as this call came into clearer focus. Sorrow and joy were readily present as Rachel and I prayer together over a new, possible future and began to think of how we would tell Nate; as I carefully informed friends and colleagues about this impending change; as I reflected upon all the blessings Southminster has given me – the gifts of encouragement, guidance and, most of all, love which makes me feel equipped to pursue this new call in the first place.

I anticipate more tears and more laughter are in store in this next month together.

No doubt, it will be difficult at times – but I take heart, because like Bishop Tutu, I believe in the midst of doing what we do when we say good-bye, we will become even more mysteriously alive to the grace, love, and hope of Christ in our midst. It will be sad, yes. But it will also be deep joy.

So, do not fear my friends. Do not fear the tears, the anxiety, the change. For close at hand alongside them is laughter, a hope, a new beginning. Let them all flow; then, let them all burst forth; let them all be prayerful offerings to the God who loves us, who is with us always, who holds every broken heart together. No matter where we go and what may come next.

Alleluia! Amen!

The Lord Bless and Keep You,

Ben

Ministry Units Meet

Congregational Care Ministry Unit will meet Monday morning, May 7th, at 10:30 AM. The remaining ministry units - Administrative, Faith Formation, Fellowship, Generosity, Outreach, Property, and Worship - will meet Wednesday evening, **May 9th**, at 5:30 P.M. All are encouraged to stay for dinner at 6:30. Make reservations by calling the Church Office, 822-1124.



Pentecost Offering May 27th

Each year on Pentecost Sunday, we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit and the birthday of the church. The Holy Spirit remains with us still, connecting us with the church of the past, continuing to inspire the church of today, and pointing us to the church of the future. Each year, this celebration is marked by receiving the Pentecost Offering which nurtures the faith of those who are the church to come – children, youth, and young adults.

Psalm 71 testifies that a foundation of faith established during childhood helps ensure lifelong faith and service. The patterns and lessons established during these formative years continue to bear fruit throughout a person's life. By giving to the Pentecost Offering, we participate in helping our children, youth, and young adults grow up to proclaim with the Psalmist, "O God, from my youth you have taught me, and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds."

Since this offering started in 1998, Presbyterians have raised more than \$14 million for ministries that benefit young members of God's family. We believe we are called to do even more – to support and care for young people as they build a strong foundation of faith.

Won't you give as you are blessed on May 27th.

In Daily Labors Let God Lead

"My faith has brought me to a point in my life where I want to help others and give of myself in hands-on service. Volunteering has given me the opportunity to serve those who need it most and impact a part of society that I might never have come in contact with otherwise." --- Service Volunteer

As we look into our lives of how generosity can be a very important mainstay in all that we do, **Let God Lead You** in utilizing the various gifts that you have been given and in following God's call to use these gifts to furthering your stewardship to all our neighbors both at Southminster, as well as outside our walls. As we share our gifts of time, talent, and yes, money, it will help all of us to be grounded and grateful for God's generosity to each of us.

Let's share this prayer with others as we look to the generous and always forgiving Lord:

Lead me, God, to listen for your voice. Lead me to say yes to your call and to understand that my work is ministry in your name. Amen.

The Generosity Ministry Unit

Outreach Ministry Unit News

Our Spring Mission Wednesday project is providing weekend summer bags for the moderate care girls at Presbyterian Home for Children. The girls have the opportunity to earn weekend outings and these bags will provide them with the items they need to enjoy the day. Doug Marshall, the CEO of the Children's Home, will join us for the evening to explain more of what the Children's Home does. Make plans to join us on May 2nd at 6:00 p.m.

There is still one date left to help serve a meal at First Light for the first half of the year. Please consider serving breakfast on May 20th. Grab a group of friends, family, or colleagues to experience this wonderful opportunity. If you need meal suggestions or have any questions, please contact Sara Brown, Linda Carey, or Heather Benoit.

NEW TO SOUTHMINSTER! Outreach now has a closet! We will be collecting non-perishable food items and travel sized toiletries all year long! You will find the closet in the Youth and Family Room directly behind the sanctuary. By having an ongoing collection, we will be better equipped to help places like GBM, First Light, and more when they are in need. Let's get those shelves stocked!

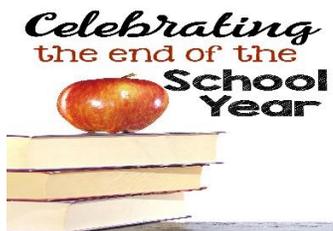
Sara Brown, Outreach Ministry Unit Moderator

Day School News

The year is winding down at Southminster Day School ... and what a year it has been!

We celebrated our 50th anniversary this year! We hosted past students, teachers, and parents during the wonderful celebration. We also began the Wall of Students in the upstairs hallway to commemorate our history of graduating classes. Walking through the halls, I am reminded of the many accomplishments of our students. They have truly worked hard.

We are thankful for this fiftieth year, for our devoted staff, and especially thankful for Southminster Presbyterian Church for allowing us to offer this wonderful campus to our Southminster Day School families for another year! See you in August!



Jeanie Covin, Director

Attention Session Members

Moderators are to submit Ministry Unit reports by Saturday, May 13th. All Session members are asked to pick up minutes, agenda, and reports following worship on the 13th in preparation for the Stated Meeting on **Monday, May 14th, at 5:30 PM in Grace Hall.**

(In) Forming Faith

CELEBRATING!

- **BRIGHT SUNDAY AND YOUTH SUNDAY THANKS!** On April 22nd and 29th, our church held their two annual worship events featuring children and youth as worship leaders - Bright Sunday (4/22) and Youth Sunday (4/29).

Thanks be to God for all the faithful leaders who helped make these worship services happen!

Our Children: Nate Acton, Lucy Benoît, Shelby Benoit, Porter Brown, Michael Bryson, Benjamin Heisler, Cormac House, Lily Hughes, Mary Frances Pitts, and William Pitts!

Our Youth: Macgyver Brown, Hopper Coley, Elizabeth Corcoran, Jack Fortner, Janie Fortner, Molly Heisler, Russell House, Sam Kirkpatrick, MJ McWilliams and Noelle Thrasher!

And all our wonderful teachers and helpers: Rachel Acton, Laura Bannon, Heather Benoit, Sara Brown, Anna Glover, Larry Hardin, Katie Hughes, Allison McWilliams, Betsy Murphy, Janet Nebrig, David Renaker, Patrick Riley, Sally Stephens, and George Van Kirk!

Well done, good and faithful servants!

- **YOUTH FUNDRAISER:** On April 25th, our 4th Montreat Youth Fundraiser was a huge success. Our Trivia Night (along with BBQ, Bake Sale, and Silent Auction) was a lively event that raised \$1,600 for youth to attend the Montreat Youth Conference. **The youth are thankful beyond words for all who contributed and participated!**

EXPERIENCING!

- **LIVING RIVER SUMMER CAMP:** If you want your children, grandchildren, friend's children, students, or neighbors to have a life-changing faith-forming experience, they NEED to go to Summer Camp this year -- and what better place than Living River? Registration is live at <http://www.livingriver.org/>. Remember: **children go to camp because someone invited them to camp!** Invite someone today!
- **SUMMER SUNDAY SCHOOL:** See elsewhere in the Sounds for information about a combined adult and youth experience and offerings for children during Sundays in June and July.

ANTICIPATING

Some dates to keep in mind for May and beyond:

- **July 7 - 14: Montreat Youth Conference**
- **July 22 - 25: Vacation Bible School:** See promo in this edition of the Sounds for our new Evening VBS for Children of God of all ages (including adults!) on Sunday through Wednesday.
- **June and July Combined Summer Sunday School:** See note in Sounds about our Summer Faith Formation series on "Peacemaking"!

Thank You Note Received



Many thanks for all the help, visits, prayers, calls, cards, and concerns during my recent hospital stay. Being that we have limited family, it's nice to feel comfort and love from our Church Family. Special thanks to Tom, Ben, deNay, Patty Sears, Judy Habeeb, David Reneker and Dereck. We love you!

Gail and Larry Hardin

A Note of Thanks from Property

The Property Ministry Unit would like to thank all those who came out and gave of your time and energy on our recent church workday. It was a great success and much was accomplished. Thanks again!

Property Ministry Unit

Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for the June 2018 *Sounds of Southminster* and calendar will be **Friday, May 25th**. The newsletter is a great way to keep the congregation informed of all things happening in the life of Southminster and in the lives of our members. You may submit articles to Betsy at bets_southmin@bellsouth.net. Thanks!!



SOUTHMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
FOUNDATION FOR MINISTRY
Changing lives through mission.

SHARING GOD'S LOVE Southminster Foundation for Ministry

The purpose of the Southminster Foundation for Ministry is to bring Christ and His love to our local and global communities by supporting charitable ministries consistent with the principles of Christian stewardship. To accomplish this, the Foundation manages and grows an endowment to which funds are donated and then invested to create a perpetual source for the Foundation's mission. **THUS, A GIFT TO THE FOUNDATION IS A GIFT THAT CONTINUES TO GIVE YEAR AFTER YEAR.**

The Foundation endowment assets are invested under professional management and overseen by an investment committee of the Foundation.

Please consider donating now or including the Foundation in your estate planning. Each year all gifts are acknowledged and dedicated at a June worship service. Donations of \$10,000 or more are recognized on a plaque in the Narthex. Gifts to the Foundation are tax deductible as a charitable contribution.

For additional information, please contact Gretchen Cloud, Foundation President, at 205-991-5607.

Clerk of Session Report

A summary of the actions taken at the April Stated Session meeting is as follows:

1. In an electronic vote, the Session approved the use of the Southminster facility for an upcoming wedding.
2. In an electronic vote, the Session approved the Property Ministry Unit recommendations for a Minute for Mission on Easter Sunday, April 1, to publicize the Spring SOS Workday on Saturday, April 7.
3. The Session approved the Faith Formation Ministry Unit recommendation for a Minute for Mission on April 29 to speak about Youth Ministry.
4. The Session approved the Faith Formation Ministry Unit recommended summer Sunday School curriculum on Peacemaking.
5. The Session approved the Faith Formation Ministry Unit recommendation for a Minute for Mission on May 6 to promote the summer Sunday School Peacemaking series.
6. The Session approved the Outreach Ministry Unit recommendation for a Minute for Mission on April 22 to give an update on the Congo mission projects.
7. The Session approved the Outreach Ministry Unit recommendation to include a welcome paragraph about Southminster in the attendance booklets, with final language to be jointly formulated with the Worship Ministry Unit.
8. The Session approved the Property Ministry Unit recommendation to create a temporary committee reporting through the Ministry Unit to develop an overall facility Emergency Operations Plan.
9. The Session approved the Administrative Ministry Unit recommendation to establish an online giving program administered by the Presbyterian Foundation, with details to be jointly worked out with the Generosity Ministry Unit.
10. With thanks for their recent work, the Session approved dismissing the Pastoral Transition Team.

Respectfully submitted,
Bill Christians

Wednesday Night Supper and Programs

Weekly Wednesday Night Fellowship Suppers are winding down. Come enjoy delicious meals and great programs to wind down the school year.

May 2nd:

Meal: Ham, Cheese Grits, Green Beans, Dessert

Program: Mission Wednesday – Summer Bags for Moderate Care Girls at Presbyterian Home for Children

May 9th:

Meal at 6:30 tonight: Spaghetti, Tossed Salad, Dessert

Ministry Unit Meetings at 5:30 p.m.

May 16th:

Menu: Cookout: Hamburgers, Hotdogs, Condiments, Chips, Ice Cream Sandwiches

Program: Recognition of High School Seniors and Matthew 28

Dr. Tom Bryson's Presbytery Examination

Southminster has a busy May ahead as we move forward with our new minister. Dr. Tom's examination and approval by the Presbytery will be at the First Presbyterian Church in Livingston on **Thursday, May 17th**. This is the final step in the process. A number of us plan to attend. If you would like to join us for this occasion, contact Marilee Dukes at marileedukes@hotmail.com. We will organize a carpool. We have not been informed about a specific time, but we will let you know when we are contacted by the Presbytery. If you want to go on your own, contact Marilee anyway so we can let you know about the time. Let's show our support for our new minister!

The Congregation of Southminster Presbyterian Church proudly invites you to join us as we celebrate the Installation of our New Pastor, Rev. Dr. Thomas Michael Bryson.

We will celebrate this wonderful occasion through worship and with God's Word. Your presence will make this event a memorable experience for Tom and our congregation.

Southminster Presbyterian Church
1124 Montgomery Highway, Vestavia Hills, AL 35216
(205) 822-1124

Sunday, May 20th ~ 3:30 p.m.

A reception will be held in Grace Hall following the Service.



Prayer in Generosity

In the movie adaptation of James Michener's *Centennial*, a young Amish man leaves his traditional Lancaster Valley farm to emigrate to Colorado in the mid-1800s. Feeling the thrill of his new surroundings, he pauses in the midst of the wide prairie, and finds himself moved to pray. Instead of adopting his traditional prayer posture, hands folded and head bowed, he throws his arms open wide and shouts his prayer of thanksgiving! He adapts his posture of prayer to fit his changing relationship to prayer and to God.

As our understanding of generosity stewardship changes, so too will our attitudes, language, activity, and prayer. Starting this month, let's try new prayer postures and think about how the following prayer can lead us to greater generosity:

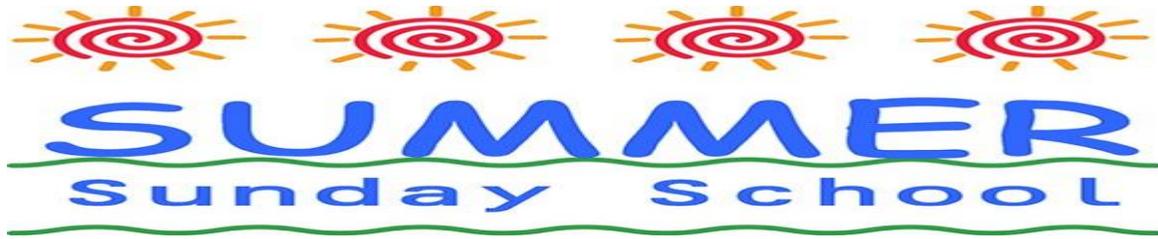
Lead me, O Lord, to listen to your voice in the midst of the world's noises.

Lead me, O Lord, to respond to your call amid the expectations and demands of daily life.

Lead me, O Lord, to serve with Christ-like compassion.

Lead me, O Lord, to imitate your generosity.

The Generosity Ministry Unit



Seeking Peace

What is the meaning of biblical peacemaking? How can we put peace into practice? These questions are the focus of our Summer Sunday School for Youth & Adults.

***The series will be on Sundays
from 9 to 10 am
in Grace Hall
June 3rd through August 5th,
excluding July 1st and 8th.***

*While Dr. Tom Bryson will be involved in teaching the series,
we will need some other volunteers to help as well!*

*If you would be interested in leading a session, contact the
Church Office to speak with Tom or Ben about dates
you would be available.*

Children's Activities are also planned for
June and July Sundays and will be shared later in May.

Come, let us study together!



SOUTHMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, USA



1124 Montgomery Highway, Vestavia, AL 35216

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Southminster Presbyterian Church
1124 Montgomery Highway
Vestavia Hills, AL 35216
Church: 205/822-1124
Church Fax: 205/822-6739
Website Address: <http://southminsterpcusa.org>
E-Mail Address: southmin@bellsouth.net

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
PERMIT NO.
2358
BIRMINGHAM,
ALA.

Staff Members

Rev. Dr. Tom Bryson, Pastor
Rev. Ben Acton, Associate Pastor for Education and Youth Ministries
Larry Hardin, Dir. Of Music Ministries
David Renaker, Organist
Jeanie Covin, Dir. Of Day School
Betsy Murphy, Church Administrator
Dereck Stewart, Sexton



SOUNDS OF SOUTHMINSTER



VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Join us for the ride of a lifetime!
Sunday, July 22nd – Wednesday, July 25th
Light Dinner – 5:30 p.m.
VBS – 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
4 years through completed 5th grade

VBS is for adults too!!!!
Introducing for the first time in a long time,
VBS for adults and youth.

Join us on a walk through the New Testament!!